

# Summary of Watershed-Based Mitigation Subcommittee Meeting

Feb. 15, 2005, 10:00 AM –3:00 PM

Natural Resources Building, Room 537, Olympia

## Attendees:

- Fish and Wildlife: Peter Birch, John Carleton, Margen Carlson, and Bob Zeigler
- Natural Resources: Jay Udelhoven
- Ecology: Annie Szvetcz
- Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission: Darrel Phare
- Association of Washington Cities: Jackie White
- HDR/EES: Rick Anderson
- Regional Fish Enhancement Groups: Sheila North
- Army Corps of Engineers: Kate Stenberg
- Transportation: Barb Aberle, Dick Gersib (by phone), and Tim Hilliard

## Updates:

- Darrell Phare updated us on his discussions with Rick Anderson regarding a watershed characterization relating to work on SR-539 in the Nooksack basin. They will continue to discuss the issue which is of great interest to the Lummi tribe. Rick will insure that the tribe continues to be involved.
- Barb Aberle updated us on the Regional Fish Enhancement Groups project. The updated scope of work is signed and the groups are hard at work. Sheila added that there are two phases – developing processes and criteria, which is being done by the Stillaguamish / Snohomish RFEG, and the actual priority list development which is being split among 5 groups, all in Western WA. Barb added that the TPEAC budget has a small amount of money that might be added to the contract to allow priority list development for one more WRIA, preferably on the east side (Walla Walla for example). The subcommittee consensus was that this would be good, especially if it could be Walla Walla to fit in with ongoing work in Walla Walla (Rick Anderson's work).
- Jackie White discussed the final report of the TPEAC Local Government Task Force. The report notes that local government has many permitting responsibilities and also is responsible for much of the comprehensive planning for transportation and land use. The report looked at 89 cases where there had been delays in state transportation projects. Of these, 11 were thought to have been delayed by local government. These were mostly permitting and shoreline related delays. Overall they found that there was a misunderstanding of how business is done locally and a feeling in local government that they were only involved at the last minute. Also, local government has a high turnover rate and a heavy workload. A need is seen for education state activities, state understanding of local roles, and more model ordinances and programmatic permitting.
- Jay Udelhoven updated the subcommittee on the DNR banking bill now in front of the legislature. This is SB 5273 (and companion HB 1492), "Developing a single pilot mitigation bank on state-owned aquatic lands." The House has passed it out of committee, but it is still

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in committee in the Senate. They added language limiting the service area to a 40-mile radius and requiring tribal consultation.

- Dick Gersib updated us on the watershed screening tool. He pointed out that within WSDOT, the project offices are isolated from the Environmental Services office and a better connection is needed. The screening tool is designed to allow project engineers to have a “heads up” on project environmental issues during the huge process of ramping up to do a transportation project. The analysis is a type of cost-risk analysis, alerting the engineers to potentially expensive onsite mitigation needs that might be better served by implementing watershed-based mitigation efforts.
- Margen Carlson talked briefly about the mitigation optimization effort. The report is drafted and is being reviewed internally. Jay Manning, the new governor’s Ecology Director nominee, is aware of the effort and interested in it. He’s asked for time to review it.

### **Barb Aberle on TPEAC Progress Report:**

The TPEAC end-of-biennium report is being developed and there was an “off-line meeting” of part of this subcommittee to discuss our portions of it. Megan White says that we shouldn’t be saying “we did this and that” but instead “what we did led to these results, this progress,” etc. We want to stress how our projects work together, what real accomplishments there have been. We discussed highlighting the work of Rick Anderson and EES, the work the RFEG is undertaking, and the screening tool. Dick Gersib said that we should stress “next steps” – how do we integrate our work with the rest of WSDOT, and the “outside world.” Where will our work lead? We need a vision of fully integrating our watershed work into the big processes, both within WSDOT and in the watershed world.

We agreed that more off-line work is needed with Jackie White, Dick Gersib, Rick Anderson, Sheila North, and Tim Hilliard involved. It was pointed out that Jackie White and Rick Anderson have special knowledge of how the legislature likes to have information presented.

Peter Birch pointed out that what we need to do next is develop an outline and assign writing tasks to various folks. Tim Hilliard agreed to pull together the Watershed Subcommittee parts. He can get the details from old minutes, old reports, etc., however the synthesis – the write-ups of real accomplishments – will need a group effort.

We settled on a twin approach where Tim works on details, and Rick on a “big-picture” approach, and the rest of the off-line group helps as needed and helps refine the end-product.

### **HDR / EES Pilots, Feb 7 US-12 Meeting in Walla Walla , etc. (Rick Anderson):**

SR-539 and I-5 projects are in data collection phase; Rick is focusing on US-12 today. Rick noted that the June TPEAC meeting will be in Whatcom County and they plan a field trip to the SR-593 project.

At the meeting in Walla Walla they spent a good bit of time on the alignment issues. The two major alignments discussed last month – basically north and south – have been augmented by a third, hybrid route which starts along the northern alignment then cuts across to the south to join the south-

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ern route along the river (“Zangar Junction alignment”). The Fish and Wildlife Service is worried that the northern alignment will isolate the wildlife refuge near the confluence of the Walla Walla and the Columbia rivers. The Zangar Jct. Route avoids the Nine-Mile Canyon area, but also the floodplain of the lower river.

They are looking at problems sharing data between phases of the project, at how they can schedule the delivery of project centric as well as watershed based environmental data as needed, and at adding an adaptive management component to the project. Using a matrix they address risk management - what issues, what alternatives – frame issues formally, choose preferred routes. Discussions of watershed characterization and cultural resources and tribal involvement followed.

Peter Birch asked at what point we identify permits. Rick answered that this is still ahead but he thinks we need to build it in to the other studies – timelines, permit requirements, etc. This is desirable on the SR-539 study.

### **Next Meeting:**

The next meeting will be Tuesday, March. 15, probably again in the Natural Resources Building, Room 537 (Fish and Wildlife Director’s Conference Room).

Meeting ideas:

- Margen Carlson on Mitigation Optimization
- More on the progress report
- Update from Rick Anderson
- Jay Udelhoven on progress of the DNR Banking Bill
- Sheila North update on the RFEG work

### **Adjournment:**

Meeting adjourned 2:30 PM.